

REMARKS

In the Office Action¹, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-15, 18, 19, and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 11-127290 to Hisashi ("*Hisashi*"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,348,971 to Owa et al. ("*Owa*"), and further in view of JP 2001-249781 to Eiji ("*Eiji*"); rejected claims 6 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hisashi*, *Owa*, *Eiji*, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,061,391 to Hopper et al. ("*Hopper*"); and rejected claims 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hisashi*, *Owa*, *Eiji*, and further in view of in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,173,718 to Iwata et al. ("*Iwata*").

Applicant has amended claims 1, 5, and 9, and canceled claims 3, 7, 11, and 13-15 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12 and 18-24 remain pending.

Claim 1 recites an image forming system comprising, for example:

...
the image forming system having memory to store usage histories of the latent image carriers of the image forming apparatuses and having a function of controlling image forming apparatuses outputting the image based on the carrier usage history data stored in the memory to achieve approximately the same deteriorated conditions,

wherein the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of each latent image carrier.

(emphasis added).

The Examiner states that paragraph 0070 of *Hisashi* discloses the claimed "usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicant declines to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

deterioration through use of each latent image carrier" (Office Action at page 4). This is not correct.

According to this passage of *Hisashi*, information regarding the "remaining print number pages" may be transmitted, and an "output destination change and number of copies" may be displayed. However, neither this passage nor any other passage of *Hisashi* teaches or suggests the claimed "the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of each latent image carrier," as recited in claim 1.

Owa does not cure the deficiencies of *Hisashi*. *Owa* discloses "a printing system comprising a plurality of printers and a host computer that can selectively drive the printers" (col. 2, lines 14-16). *Owa* does not teach or suggest "the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of each latent image carrier," as recited in claim 1.

Eiji does not cure the deficiencies of *Hisashi* and *Owa*. *Eiji* discloses a "print control unit." However, *Eiji* does not teach or suggest "the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of each latent image carrier," as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, *Hisashi*, *Owa*, and *Eiji* fail to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 1. Claims 2, 4, 18, 19, and 22-24 depend from claim 1 and are thus also allowable over *Hisashi*, *Owa*, and *Eiji* for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Independent claims 5 and 9, and dependent claims 8 and 12, while of different scope than claim 1, are allowable over *Hisashi*, *Owa*, and *Eiji* for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Regarding the rejection of claims 6 and 10, which depend from independent claim 5, the Examiner relies on *Hopper* for allegedly disclosing the elements of these claims. Even assuming this allegation is correct, which Applicant does not concede, *Hopper* does not teach or suggest "wherein the usage history of the developer is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of the developer," as recited in claim 5, and required by dependent claims 6 and 10.

Therefore, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established, and claims 6 and 10 are also allowable over *Hisashi*, *Owa*, *Eiji*, and *Hopper* for at least the same reasons as claim 5.

Regarding the rejection of claims 20 and 21, which depend from claim 1, the Examiner relies on *Iwata* for allegedly disclosing "a display unit for displaying a list of the image forming apparatuses selected for outputting the image" (Office Action at page 16). Even assuming this allegation is correct, which Applicant does not concede, *Iwata* does not teach or suggest wherein the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of each latent image carrier," as recited in claim 1, and required by dependent claims 20 and 21.

Therefore, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established, and claims 20 and 21 are also allowable over *Hisashi*, *Owa*, *Eiji*, and *Iwata* for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge
any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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